

M E M O R A N D U M

ON THE PROVOCATIVE ATTACK OF THE JAPANESE IN THE NOMONGAN
AREA IN 1939I. The nature of the aggression

Military actions in the Nomongan area, which took place on the territory of the Eastern bulge of the Mongolian People's Republic, were initiated by the Japanese and they were responsible for them. After the unsuccessful attempt to seize the Soviet territory in the lake Khasan area in 1938, the Kwantung Army Headquarters began a planned preparation for the attack against the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR). The Tamtsaksky bulge of the MPR territory, east of the Khalhin-Gol river was chosen as the objective of the attack.

The Japanese and Manchurian authorities in their press bulletins claimed that the Khalhin-Gol river was the actual frontier between the Mongolian People's Republic and Manchuria in the area east and southeast of the Buir-Nur lake. This was done in order to justify their provocative and aggressive actions against the Mongolian People's Republic.

In reality, according to the official maps, the frontier between MPR and Manchuria ran in this area not along the Khalhin-Gol river, but east of this river along the line Khulat-Uliyn-Obo and Nomon-Kan Burd Obo.

This is also confirmed by Map N 43 of the Chinese album, published in 1919 in Peking by the Post-Master general of China (the copy of map N 43 was published in the central Soviet press on July 14, 1939) and by the Japanese secret outline map captured in the area of battle activities together with the Yamagata separate detachment (see Appendix N I).

From the day of the formation of the MPR the outposts of the MPR frontier corps were stationed along this line. Prior to the outbreak of the incident this frontier between MPR and Manchuria, east of the Khalhin-Gol river, had been disputed by nobody, including the Japanese and Manchurians.

Thus the claim of the Japanese and Manchurians that the frontier between the MPR and Manchuria runs along the Khalhin-Gol river is not confirmed by any documents and actually is a sheer fabrication of the Japanese military clique done with the purpose of justifying their provocative and aggressive actions.

II. The preparation of the aggression by the Japanese

The Japanese carried out all-round and thorough preparation for the attack, using their customary method of provocations. Since January 1939 the Japanese armed detachments began to systematically violate the state frontier of the MPR.

There were about thirty violations of that kind.

Simultaneously a large group of regular troops of the 23 infantry division and Bargut cavalry regiments was concentrated on the sector of the frontier in this area, which from the Mongolian side was guarded only by a small frontier outpost, stationed west of the Khalhin-Gol river (see Appendix N 3 and N 4).

In January the Japanese and Manchurians several times opened fire at the patrols of the Mongolian outpost. And in February groups of the Japanese nearly platoon strong several times crossed the frontier, penetrating deep into the Mongolian territory.

On March 17, 1939 at 13 hours the frontier guards killed a Japanese bargut on the Mongolian territory. Judging by a visiting card and a photo found on him he was a Japanese-Kawano-Kansira, chief of a police department of the town of Tu-Tsuan.

Seeing no back-action from the part of the MPR forces and not being satisfied that it was a mere frontier incident, the commander of the 23d infantry division lieutenant general Komatsubara Mititaro on May 1, 1939 issued order N 22 (see appendix N 5) as a guide to large-scale operations.

In this order he refers to the instructions given in "Measures of settling conflicts on the Soviet-Manchurian frontier" (see Appendix N 6). These instructions recommend to the troops to cross into the Soviet territory or to lure the Soviet soldiers onto the Manchurian territory and at all costs to try to capture prisoners of war and also the corpses of the killed and under no circumstances to leave evidence on the Soviet territory.

At the beginning of May the enemy began to act in a challenging manner. On May 11 from 4.00 to 5.00 hours the Japanese and barguts about 200 men strong armed with light machine-guns and mortars, violated the MPR frontier in the district of Nomun Khan Durd Obo, attacked the Mongolian outpost (20 men strong) and pursued them to the Khalhin-Gol river, penetrating 20 km. deep into the Mongolian territory. Simultaneously the Japanese aircraft started flying over the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic.

On May 14 at 6 hours the mounted Japanese and barguts 300 men strong violated the MPR frontier in the district of the 7th outpost, seized Dugur-Obo and came onto the eastern bank of the Khalhin-Gol river. During this day the Japanese constantly appeared over the MPR territory.

On May 15, at 12 hours 45 minutes five Japanese light bombers made a raid on the 7th outpost. They dropped 52 bombs from the height of 800 metres and fired from machine-guns during low flight. As a result 2 tsiriks were killed and 19 wounded. Prior to the raid three planes conducted air reconnaissance. The frontier guards saw that 700 cavalry men and 3 trucks with infantry soldiers were concentrated on the eastern bank of the Khalhin-Gol river. Thus beginning from May 11, 1939 the Japanese actually started hostilities using regular Japanese and Bargut units to this purpose.

All these provocative actions showed clearly that the Japanese were preparing the large-scale operations and were striving to seize the territory of the MPR.

In the second half of May 1939 the Japanese concentrated the units of the 23d infantry division, three (1, 7, 8) Bargut cavalry regiments and about 40 planes in the area of the Khalhin-Gol river. On May 28, 1939 the enemy troops suddenly attacked the MPR cavalry guard detachments on the territory of the Outer Mongolia. Thus the Japanese started large-scale military operations.

The Japanese beforehand had built a railroad line leading to the area where it was planned to begin the attack. For the purpose of carrying out the military-topographical preparation of the battle area, the Japanese as early as in the middle of April 1939 sent a topographical detachment of the Kwantung Army Headquarters to this area.

The 23d infantry division had to ensure the work of this detachment. (see Appendix "7, order N I to the 64th infantry regiment dated April 13, 1939).

The large-scale preparatory measures taken by the Japanese for the purpose of attack in the area of the Khalhin-Gol river were vividly described in the report of the 1st Army group Military Council dated November 15, 1939, N 0037 addressed to the Chief of the Red Army General Staff. (see Appendix N 8 - extract from the said report).

In order to justify their adventurous actions before the public opinion and with the purpose of finding a pretext for the seizure of territories, the Japanese actually forged the Manchukuo frontier marking it on their topographical maps along the Khalhin-Gol river, thus moving it 18-20 km. forward. The Japanese command were striving to support by this their false statement that the MPR troops and not the Japanese forces had violated the frontier.

The documentary evidence to this provocation is contained in order N 1532 issued by UEDA, the Commanding General of the Kwantung Army, who in the second paragraph of the order, issued in Tchang-Tchung at 14 hours of June 20, 1939 said the following:

"The Army is to prepare for the rear operation in order to wipe out the army of the Outer Mongolia, which crossed the frontier" (see Appendix 9 - copy of the translation of the order to the Kwantung Army N 1532).

III. Progress of aggression

Fulfilling the Treaty of mutual assistance between the Soviet Government and the Mongolian People's Republic and instructions given by Comrade Molotov, the head of the Government, that the Soviet Union would defend Mongolian frontier as if it were its own frontiers, the Command ordered the transferring of the Red Army units to the Khalhin-Gol river area.

During the battles which took place in May, the Japanese could not attain their aims and, having suffered great losses, strengthened their preparation for a still larger operation, striving to seize territory and wipe out the Soviet and Mongolian forces. By the end of June 1939, the Japanese concentrated all the units of the 23rd Infantry Division, part of the 7th Infantry Division, two tank regiments and Bargut cavalry regiments in the battle area. All these units were reinforced by artillery taken from other units of the Kwantung Army. Not fewer than 150 airplanes of the Japanese Air Forces were also concentrated in this area.

The enemy planned to smash our defense suddenly and quickly and to break with its main forces through to our rear lines of communication.

To carry that into effect the forces of the 23rd Division were ordered to force the Khalkin-Gol river and to capture and rout the Soviet and Mongolian troops. (see Appendix N 10, copy of the translation of order to the 23rd Division N 105, June 30, 1939).

To camouflage the expansionist aims of Japanese militarism the Japanese command used the method of political shop practice and under the cover of this directed the actions of the armed forces to realize their aggressive strivings, calling these large-scale battle actions a mere "incident on the frontier between Mongolia and Manchuria" (see Appendix N 11 - a copy of translation of the 6th Army commander declaration dated August 10, 1939).

As a matter of fact the Kwantung Army command in close contact with the command of the 6th Japanese Army did not cease the preparation for another still larger Japanese offensive in the fall of 1939.

Expansionist aims and purposes of this offensive and preparatory measures taken by the Japanese which were connected with them are documentarily proved by the declaration of the Commander of the 6th Army in September 1939 (see Appendix N 12 - a copy of translation of the 6th Army Commander's declaration in September 1939).

The enemy failed in carrying out their criminal plans. Instead of the triumphal march, which the Japanese counted upon, they paid a high price for their adventure.

The Japanese committed many atrocities, like their friends the German fascist brutes. During the battles near the Bain-Tsagan mountain political instructor Victorov, who fought bravely, was wounded. He was surrounded by the enemies and tortured to death; the brutal samurais cut out his tongue and heart, put out his eyes and stabbed him with knives.

Our troops, launching an offensive in August 1939, routed the Japanese invaders, cleared the MPR territory of the enemy and took on the defensive along the frontier line.

On September 16, 1939 the hostilities ceased in accordance with the Treaty between the Soviet Government and the Japanese Government and the order of the People's Commissar for Defense.

Appendix to the text MN 1-12.

The Red Army General Staff
Military History Department
Deputy Chief
Major-General

Correct: Signed

(Zaryatin)

March 12, 1946.

Page 17 of the 1st Army group Military Council on the actions in the Nonongan area in 1939

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE DOCUMENT

I, L. Tarkhov, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant in the Russian and English languages; and above is a correct and true translation of the indicated Document.

Signature: L. Tarkhov

Copy

APPENDIX No. 12

Translation from the Japanese.

PROCLAMATION OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE 6th ARMY

Although the order to reform the 6th Army was issued before, I must now state with sorrow that the realization of the glorious task of defense of the North-west area failed because the order was not carried out. The Army was cast into a whirlpool of irregular war on the frontier between Manchurian and Mongolia. Much control of actions on the front continued for more than ten days into the present. Due to the brave and resolute actions of all the units under lieutenant-General Kamatsubara chaos in the course of battles was diminished. Now the Army is preparing in the Dzindzin Sune area for a new offensive.

The Commanding General of the Kwantung Army decided this autumn to help us by sending the well trained troops stationed in Manchuria; he transfers them to the place of the future battle, places them under my command and plans urgent measures to be taken to settle the conflict. The circumstances are now such that it is clear that the matter is beyond the limits of a mere frontier conflict. We are now waging a sacred war in China and any changes in the conflict under the circumstances of the complicated inner and outer situation acquire great state importance. The army has only one way to carry out its actions, that is to make the army unanimous and consolidated and immediately strike a crushing blow at the enemy to annihilate its growing insolence. At present the preparation of the army is being successfully carried on. The Army will meet the coming autumn by finishing with one blow this mouse-stirring and will proudly show to the world the might of the selected Imperial troops. The officers and soldiers have a deep understanding of the present circumstances. All men of the army from privates to high level are full of brave and decisive spirit and are sure of victory. The Army is always ready to crush and destroy the enemy anywhere. Having a deep faith in its first marshal the Emperor.

September 5, 1939. The commanding General of the 6th Army.

Translated from Japanese:

Senior political instructor Pavlov Supply
Officer of the 2-d rank Selyaninov
September 9, 1939.

The present copy of the translation attached to the report of the 1st Army Group Military Council of November 15, 1939 N 0037 addressed to the Chief of the Red Army General Staff on the results of the operation in the Nonongan area is correct:

The Red Army General Staff
Military History Department Research Officer

Colonel

/ Vakhterov/

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE DOCUMENT:

I, V. Tarkhov, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with the Russian and English languages: and the above is a correct and true translation of the indicated Document.

Signature: V. Tarkhov

5 ex.

7. Y.Be.

EXH.#766

Doc. # 2231

CERTIFICATE

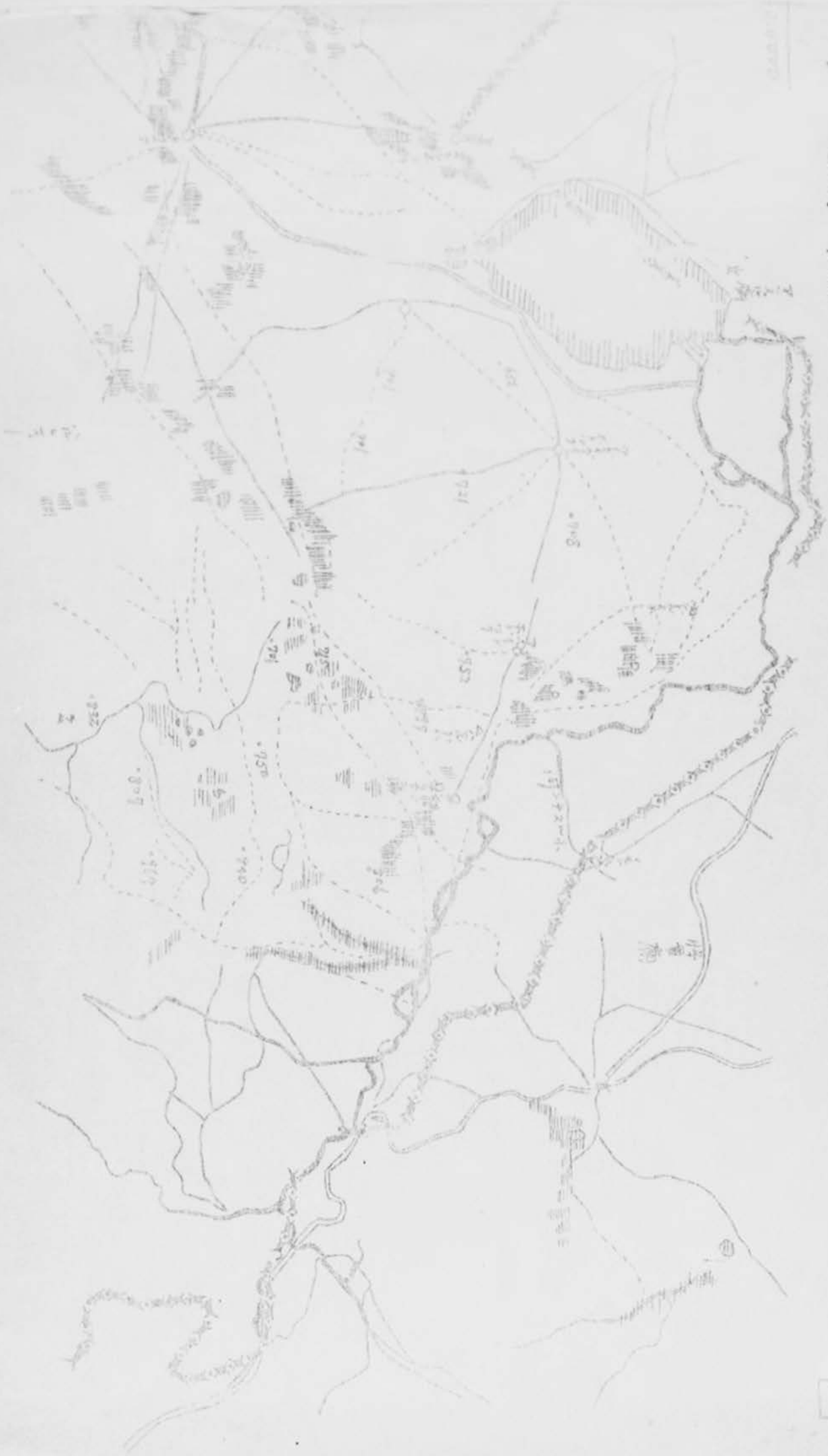
I, Maurin A.I, Chief of the Document room of the Soviet Division of the I.P.S. hereby certify that the map attached hereto was copied from the photostat map " Outer Mongolia" annexed to Doc. # 2231 (Exh 766)

Maurin, A I.
Chief of the Document Room,
Soviet Division I.P.S.
I.M.T.F.E.

Tokyo, Japan
23 May 1947

FILE COPY
RETURN TO ROOM 361

Doc 2231
Cah 966



圖地蒙外山嶺圖形戰隊及察山

1941